



In a culture that prioritizes individualism and the personal automobile, making the case to invest in public transportation initiatives can be difficult. This is especially true in communities like Greenville where the infrastructure and land development patterns have been established primarily around the personal automobile, hiding the real long-term costs of near exclusive reliance upon such inefficient transportation and masking the benefits public transportation offers. Understandably, many do not recognize the urgency of investing in public transportation as a critical component in the long term growth, health and sustainability of our community. Regrettably, many still view public transportation as merely a necessary service for those who cannot afford to own their own personal automobile. Yet, public transportation, when done right, has many tangible benefits to offer a community besides a way for those who do not have access to personal transportation to get around (although this is certainly a significant benefit in its own right!). In addition, given the significant interdependence between public transportation systems and land use development it is critical to begin making investments in public transportation well before the inevitable traffic jams and gasoline price spikes force our community to begin to explore other options. At that point, efficient and cost-effective measures of public transportation enhancement are often no longer options. This section of the newsletter will regularly highlight information regarding the importance of investing in public transportation systems and doing so now.



The following data, taken from the American Public Transportation Association website, highlights the significant return on investment that comes with investing in public transportation systems:

- Every dollar communities invest in public transportation generates approximately \$4 in economic returns.
- Every \$10 million in capital investment in public transportation yields \$30 million in increased business sales.
- Every \$10 million in operating investment yields \$32 million in increased business sales.
- Every \$1 billion invested in public transportation capital and operations creates and supports an average of 36,000 jobs.
- These 36,000 jobs result in roughly \$3.6 billion in business sales and generate nearly \$500 million in federal, state, and local tax revenues.
- The average household spends 18 cents of every dollar on transportation, and 94% of this goes to buying, maintaining, and operating cars, the largest expenditure after housing.
- Households that use public transportation and live with one less car can save on average \$9,000 every year.

At a time when budgets are strapped it might be hard to see why investing in public transportation makes sense. However, data like that from the American Public Transportation Association shows us that investment in public transportation is simply something we can't afford not to do.